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Worth reading

To : The Secretary

Through : S/S

From : ARA - Mr. Miller

Subject : Latin American Attitude at UN General Assembly.

I should like to bring to your attention the views expressed in the attached memorandum, prepared by Mr. Dreier, concerning the attitude of Latin American delegations at the Sixth Session of the UN General Assembly in Paris. Referring to a somewhat more independent and less amenable attitude on the part of these delegates, Mr. Dreier makes the following points:

1) The Latin American delegations, as well as others, are becoming more used to the power of their equal vote and more ready to use it, even against the U.S., in order to obtain a majority opinion in support of their purposes. This represents somewhat of a change over the traditional Latin American attitude in the Inter-American System where a great effort is always made to achieve unanimity. The frankly more political attitude now in evidence is encouraged by such political self-seekers as Santa Cruz of Chile.

2) It was difficult for the U.S. to bolster the low morale which was evident among Latin American delegates, due to various factors beyond our control. Because of delays in formulating our own views, there was little opportunity for the U.S. to consult sufficiently in advance with a number of Latin Americans on important political questions, so as to enlist their positive support for our position and create a sense of common purpose with them. The U. S. position regarding the election of judges was, moreover, a major factor operating against a spirit of solidarity among the U.S. and Latin American delegations.

3) There is frequently an assumption in our GA delegations that an approach by our Embassies to Latin American Governments can easily swing their delegations into line. This is a wrong assumption. By and large, in our bilateral relations with Latin Americans, we are

in an equal--but not superior--bargaining position. We can be no means be sure of our ability to change a Latin American position in the UN at any time without damaging important bilateral relations or negotiations in the process.

4) Unless we are going to be able to increase substantially our bargaining position bilaterally (which does not seem probable) we must recognize that, in order to maintain our effective leadership in the UN, we should select carefully subjects on which we really need their support and avoid requesting it on others. At the same time, we should make renewed attempts to improve our political work with other delegations, particularly by making it possible for the Latin Americans to participate in the formulation of at least some of our leading resolutions, thereby giving the Latins a greater sense of identity with us.

Attachment:
March 12 Memorandum
re Latin American Attitude
at UN General Assembly.

cc. UNA - Mr. Nickerson.

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM

March 12, 1952

There is a feeling among those connected with the Sixth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, that the leadership of the United States was not as effective as in previous sessions. The role of the Latin American Delegations is one of the principal causes for this feeling. The following observations are intended to throw some light on the reasons for what may be termed a more independent and less amenable attitude on the part of the Latin American representatives at Paris.

Without attempting to analyze here the voting record of the Latin American delegations, suffice it to say that the dissatisfaction with the Latin group stems largely from their insistence on putting through the resolution on the International Development Board, and their dalliance with the Soviet bloc in connection with the Security Council elections. Whether or not their performance is actually open to as much criticism as it has received is another question.

It is my impression that the Latin American delegations (and this comment is not necessarily limited to them) have this year become more than ever conscious of the power of their votes and more ready and willing to use it. Several reasons may contribute to this development. Over the last six years, the nature of the international organizations in which the Latin Americans have participated has changed considerably. The old tradition of Latin American international organizations revolved around the concept of a purely voluntary association in which a unanimous opinion was sought on important questions. This was the unwritten rule of the Inter-American System, even though its regulations required merely a majority vote. The desire for unanimity still persists in inter-American organizations to a lesser degree. However, in the United Nations, the achievement of a majority vote, rather than a general agreement, has been the objective generally sought (and necessarily so, if for no other reason than the existance of the persistent Soviet minority). Hence, the Latin Americans have become gradually more accustomed to this procedure. Normally accepted by the U.S., it is now being increasingly used by the Latin Americans even against the U.S.

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In this process the influence of such people as Santa Cruz (Chile) has been considerable. They have openly sought control of the Latin votes to gain political advantage for their own pet programs and personal ambitions. Moreover, the increasing and unsatisfied pressure throughout the "underdeveloped" countries for more extensive U.S. financial aid for economic development - in comparison with the huge sums being spent for military and primarily defensive purposes - has provided a fertile ground in which these operators could work.

The United States, and other great powers, acted with great generosity, if with some naiveté, in according to each member of the United Nations an equal vote in the decisions of the General Assembly. It is only gradually - and in large measure due to the recent emphasis on the GA as the major organ of the UN - that the U.S. public and Congress have begun to realize the extent to which this has given control over important decisions of the United Nations into the hands of the smaller and less developed states which comprise the majority of the sixty members.

Special difficulties in regard to the Sixth Session of the General Assembly reinforced the tendency towards a more independent Latin bloc. Several factors contributed to a lower morale among the delegates: the failure to reach a truce in Korea and the increasingly menacing attitude of the Soviet delegation, led to a feeling of futility in debates over measures for peace and disarmament. The U.S. Delegation, for reasons which we need not attempt to analyze here, was handicapped in its efforts to create a genuine enthusiasm for its proposals. The major U.S. proposal regarding disarmament lost much of its impact because of prior leaks to the press. It did not prove possible in any of the main U.S. programs at the General Assembly to work and consult in advance with a sufficiently large group of other delegations to enlist their collaboration and create in their minds a sense of participation in a common objective. Finally, the U.S. position on the election of judges of the International Court acted as a further demoralizing influence, negating much of the opportunity we might otherwise have enjoyed to create a better spirit of collaboration. If anything, the experience of the court elections served to confirm the Latin Americans in their tendency to pull together primarily for their own interests and pay less attention to traditional inter-American solidarity.

At various

At various times during and since the Assembly, the subject of our bilateral relations with the other American republics has come up as they might affect our relations with those countries in the United Nations. There appears to be in some quarters not intimately associated with Latin American relations an assumption that our position vis-a-vis most of the Latin American countries is so strong that a word from our diplomatic missions to the respective foreign offices would always be sufficient to fix the position of the respective delegations in the General Assembly in line with ours. Such is not the case.

By and large our relations with the Latin American countries are in balance. We want a good deal from them in terms of raw materials at fixed prices; advancement of U.S. economic interests and policies; protection of U.S. business from nationalistic harrassment; and cooperation in military defense of the continent. In return we offer them relatively fair treatment in obtaining allocations of scarce commodities, technical assistance programs of rather modest dimensions, an offer of military equipment for extremely limited and specialized use, and the extension of loans through the Export-Import Bank and the International Bank (IBRD) when applications are considered to be good business as well as in our national interest. We do not always pay the Latin Americans the prices they would like for their raw materials; we have sometimes to be reminded of our promises of fair treatment in scarce commodities; we do consider and sometimes adopt special tariff or other legislation affecting their interests adversely. We do not respond to their requests for a more "easy" financing of economic development, particularly through grants. By and large, we balance off the bilateral relations with the Latin American countries fairly evenly. But there is not much of a reserve left in our good will account to draw upon in emergencies or for other purposes.

We have, moreover, opened up a new and increasingly large account with those countries in the United Nations. In this new account we ask a lot: support of all our major political objectives and proposals (based on our assumption that what is good for us is good for the Latin Americans); support for UN military action in Korea and elsewhere if necessary; a decrease in the U.S. share of

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supporting the UN, with consequent increase in the share of others, etc. In return we have little to offer to the Latin Americans in terms they understand: we oppose most of their enthusiastic projects in the economic and social field; we object to their special interests, such as the rapid independence of colonial people; we dislike their juridical theories. Normally, the only thing we go along with the Latin Americans on in the GA is the election of their slate of candidates, and this year we gave them a heavy blow in that connection.

The point is sometimes made that "inter-American solidarity" in the common defense of our liberties, etc., should lead the Latin Americans to support our position in the UN by and large anyway. To this it must be pointed out that in security matters they do support us, and that credit must be given which is not always done. Moreover, solidarity is itself a creature of our relations, depending upon the continuance of fair dealings and mutual cooperation. It is not an independent factor on which we can call without putting into its maintenance as much as we ask of others.

As a result of all these factors, our Latin American UN account has not been in good shape. Our delegation, sensing this, requested bilateral approaches to the Latin governments. But our bilateral account has only limited reserves to call upon. So we are forced to take another look at this Latin American-UN account, and see how we can balance it. One way is to balance it within itself, by cutting down our demands or increasing our support of Latin Americans, or both. The alternative is to develop new policies and programs in our bilateral relations in order to create the necessary reserves with which to meet our larger commitments in the UN. Whatever the decision, it must be recognized that we cannot conduct our international relations too long on an unbalanced budget.

Perhaps the most realistic conclusion we can come to now is to recognize the need for concentrating our efforts in the GA on subjects of first importance to us, and to avoid overloading our debit ledger with numerous requests for support on matters which do not materially affect our national interests. At the same time we should make renewed efforts to improve the timing and presentation of our projects in such a way as to create among our Latin American allies a renewed sense of participation in our main endeavors.